

REMARKS

Applicants respectfully reconsideration and allowance of the pending claims. Currently, claims 1-18 remain pending in the present application, including independent claims 1, 13, and 17.

As shown above, the abstract has been amended as suggested by the Office Action. Also, the claims have been renumbered as required by the Office Action.

Furthermore, the two objections under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph have been overcome in the amendments to the claims. Specifically, claim 1 has been amended to be in proper Markush group format, and claims 3, 5, 6, 8, and 18 have been amended to replace MDX6 nylon with polyamide poly(m-xylyladipamide).

Also in the Office Action, the claims were rejected under either 35 U.S.C. §102(e) or § 103(a) in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,232,388 issued to Lan, et al. However, Applicants submit that Lan, et al. is not a valid reference under any section of §102. In the parent application, Application Serial No. 10/198,916, a declaration under 37 C.F.R. § 1.131 was filed that effectively removed Lan, et al. as a § 102(e) reference. A copy of the declaration previously filed is attached to this amendment. Specifically, Applicants had possession of the claimed exfoliated polymer-platelet nanocomposite at least as early as June 4, 1998, as shown by the wide angle X-ray diffraction profile dated June 4, 1998.

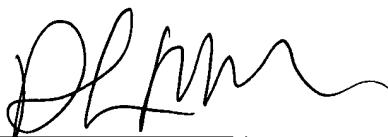
Therefore, as Applicants have submitted a declaration setting forth facts sufficient to show that the present invention was invented in the United States prior to the effective date of Lan, et al., Applicants respectfully request removal of the cited Lan, et al. reference. Furthermore, Applicants point to the Office Action dated February 5,

2004, which indicates that the present invention was reduced to practice on or before June 4, 1998, which falls before the priority date of the prior art applied (Lan, et al.).

Applicants respectfully submit that the present application is in complete condition for allowance. Examiner Costales is invited and encouraged to contact the undersigned, however should any further questions or concerns remain following consideration of this response.

Respectfully submitted,

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A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A. R. Marshall', written over a horizontal line.

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Date: January 5, 2006